

How to... make school-based research a foundation for professional learning

The following HOWTO section has been written by Lindsay Palmer and Nicky Theobald who share the Teaching School experience of The Mead Primary School, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Lindsay is Head of Teaching School and Nicky is a Spiral Associates Consultant who has worked closely with the Mead and its alliance partner schools. The Mead was designated a Teaching School in September 2011. It is a National Lead school for Research and Development and since its designation has focussed on establishing and embedding research as a core strategy for school improvement and innovation.

There is some evidence to suggest that teaching school alliances (TSAs) have struggled somewhat with one of the national Big 6 remits - to engage with and promote research and development. These HOWTO pieces show how The Mead and its TSA went about not just doing justice to this dimension of activity, but rather to make it the foundation of their whole approach to professional learning. The first piece explores how they set about establishing an enquiry culture and then there is a contribution which shows how the use of a Learning Sets model provided the framework for practitioner enquiry. Building on this, the next piece examines how such practitioner enquiry was integrated into the school's whole approach to professional learning and performance management. The HOWTO section concludes with the crucial area of how to grow leadership to ensure rich and purposeful research engagement. Throughout each piece there are a range of *professional learning tasks* to enable readers to reflect on this practice and to apply the guidance to their own context.